NATURALIST'S REPORT.

INTRODUCTION.

In the earliest periods of society, men of observation must soon have perceived that particular seasons afforded better prospects of their labours being crowned with success than others; and they soon learned to prognosticate the most proper time for beginning to hunt, fish, and sow their grain. Hesiod, one of their earliest writers whom the hand of time has spared, directs his countrymen to be observant of the rising of Orion, Arcturus, the coming of the Crane and the cry of the Cuckoo. Virgil afterwards in a more philosophic age, points out a greater variety of signs by which the husbandman may judge of the weather and approaching seasons, and however extraordinary it may appear, the same appearances which Virgil mentions as foretelling changes of the weather in Italy, equally indicate rain, storms, and fine weather in Ireland; that this is the case most of the people, called weather-wise, will readily agree. The learned Theophrastus in his history of plants has carefully noted the time of their leafing and flowering, with the appearance of some birds in the neighbourhood of Athens; and Aristophanes shows how attentive the Greeks were in his time to the appearance of birds, when he makes one of them in the Comedy of Birds say, "The greatest blessings which can happen to you mortals are derived from us; we show you the seasons of spring, summer, autumn, and winter...The Crane points out the time for sowing. When she flies with her warning notes into Egypt, she bids the sailor hang up his rudder and take his rest, and every prudent man provide himself with winter garments. Next the Kite proclaims another season, and time to shear your sheep. After that the swallow informs you when it is time to put on summer cloaths. We are to you, adds the chorus, Ammon, Dodona, Apollo; for after consulting us you undertake every thing, merchandize, purchases, marriages, &c." But the celebrated Linnæus was the first, who endeavoured to establish a calendar for the husbandman and the gardener, independent of astronomical signs, which in our northern and variable climate seldom prognosticate the changes of the weather with such certainty as might be expected. As plants however vegetate according to the temperature which prevails, and flowers blow in a regular and never varying order, we have certain means which can never fail, for directing us when to begin and leave off the various operations in husbandry and gardening. Should we therefore find, after a few years experience, that the best crops were uniformly produced when we sowed or planted at the time a particular tree or plant flowered, we have ever after a sure guide independent of astronomical revolutions, and can direct others to pursue the same plan in whatever country they are placed. Thus if we have found that on sowing peas or other seed when the gooseberry flowered, they were ready for gathering, when the corn mary gold flowered; we are pretty sure that each succeeding year the same uniformity will prevail, and, by a little attention, the times of gathering other crops will soon be known: a matter of considerable importance to all who wish to enjoy the products of their garden in succession. Advantages nearly similar, may be derived from attention to the migration of birds. These never fail to bring us the earliest intelligence of whatever changes in the weather we are to expect. When the Woodcock, Fieldfare, and other winter birds of passage appear unusually soon, and in uncommon numbers, we have every reason to expect a severe winter, and when Wild-geese and Swans passto the southward we know that the season being severe, and the waters frozen northward, a change of the wind towards that quarter will be accompanied by similar weather. We should accordingly provide ourselves with shelter, food, and suitable raiment, and the attentive gardener protection for his tender plants. But when the Swift appears, let him turn out the inhabitants of his greenhouse. By attention to insects, independent of receiving notice of an approaching plenty or scarcity of fish, we may often guard against their destructive effects.

Thus may man by the study of nature gain new powers, triumph over obstacles which present themselves on every side, and by means, placed by the Deity within his reach, acquire fore-knowledge.

REPORT.

1. QUAIL (Tetrae Coturnix) White Throat (Motacilla Sylvia) and Common Wren (M. Troglodytes) singing.

3. Autumnal Squill (Scilla Autumnalis) and Paniculated Lychnidea Phlox Paniculata flowering.

Yellow Hammer (Emberiza Citrinella) begins his Monotonous and melancholy song.

That rare insect the Thistle Butterfly (Papilio Cardui) has appeared this month in considerable numbers.

4. Cenaothus Americanus, flowering.

6. Willow Wren (Motacilla Trochilus) singing, and Elecampane (Inula Helenium) flowering.

10. Carnations now begin to decorate the Florist's parterre.

11. Perfoliate Silphium (Silphium Perfoliatum) Rudbeckia Laciniata, Rudbeckia, Digitata, and Proliferous, Saint John's Wort (Hypericum Proliferum) flowering.

13. Red Admirable Butterfly (Papilio Atalanta) appearing.

16. Red Eyebright (Euphrasia Odontites) and Superb Lily (Lilium Superbum) flowering.

17. The reaping of barley and oats now commenced, and what was not laid by the heavy rains appears a good crop, but the wheat greatly injured by mildew (Uredo Frementi.)

18. Silver Stripe Fritillary Butterfly (Papilio Paphia) and Clouded Orange Butterfly (Papilio Ædusa) have appeared this season in considerable numbers.

27. Chequer Flowered Meadow Saffron (Colchicum Varigatum) flowering. Common Swallow (Hirundo Rustica) begin to gather in flocks.

METEOROLOGICAL REPORT.

INTRODUCTION.

To prognosticate the changes which take place in the atmosphere, is so interesting an object with every description of persons, from the beggar to him that sits on an Imperial Throne, that whatever has in the smallest degree tended towards the facilitating a knowledge of the impending changes has been greedily received, and the first philosophers of Europe have not thought it beneath them to keep registers of the weather, in hopes, that, at some future period, mankind might derive important advantages from their observations. Franklin, De Luc, and others, have endeavoured to invent instruments better fitted to mark the changes which take place; but none hold a more conspicuous place than our countryman, Mr. R. Kirwan, who, in his estimate of the temperature of the different latitudes, has given a series of tables, calculated with infinite industry, from the Transactions of Learned Societies established in different quarters of the world. By these tables, the temperature may be calculated with sufficient accuracy for agricultural or horticultural purposes; but the husbandman is yet at a loss to know what dependence should be placed on the flitting clouds, whether his hay, when exposed to dry, will meet the long-wished-for sun-shine; and the gay party, bent upon a rural excursion are yet afraid to fix a particular period for their intended journey. In hopes, however, that at some future day, a genius may arise, who will arrange and give to the world, a system which shall tend to remove that uncertainty, mankind at present, labour under, with regard to foretelling the various modifications of the atmosphere, we will endeavour to present a series of well authenticated observations, which may assist him to complete so desirable an undertaking.

The showery weather which commenced with the 15th of July, continued with little intermission until the 17th of August, when a change took place, and good harvest weather continued till the 27th. About 4 P. M. of that day, loud thunder was heard to the southward of Belfast, attended with heavy rain, which apparently terminated in the south-east, and a clear sky, with a pleasant breeze, has since prevailed. It has been said, that, by the course of the thunder clouds, and their point of termination, the weather, which will in all probability follow, may be pretty accurately guessed at. This is a matter, however, that we do not at present venture to decide upon; but will be glad of any observations from our correspondents, which may elucidate this matter.

The heat of this summer, which has been unusually great, has gradually begun to decline; on the 5th and 16th, the thermometer at 8 A. M. was as high as 66, but on the 28th it was as low as 49, at 9 A. M. On the 6th at 3 P. M. it was as high as 71, which was the highest observed this month.

CELESTIAL PHENOMENA.

FOR SEPTEMBER, 1808.

The moon passes the meridian of Belfast on the 1st of this month at fifty-five minutes past nine afternoon; the two first stars of the Goat being near her, but west of the meridian...at nine she is forty-nine degrees ten minutes from the first of Pegasus, which is